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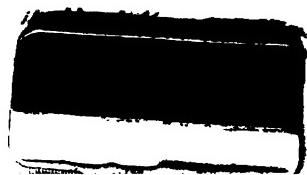
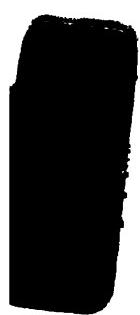
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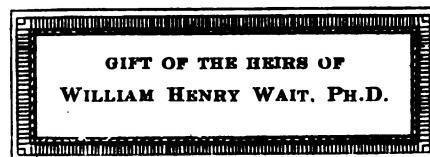
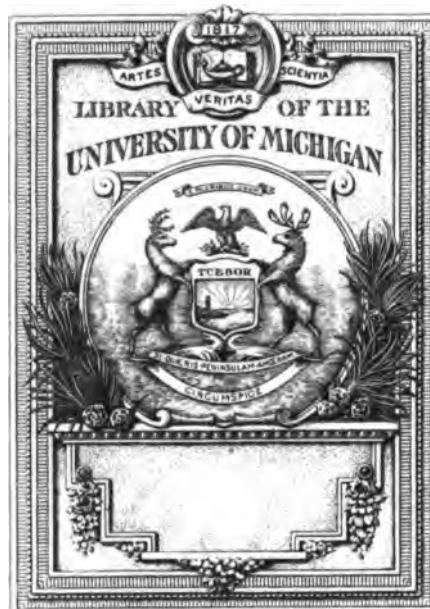
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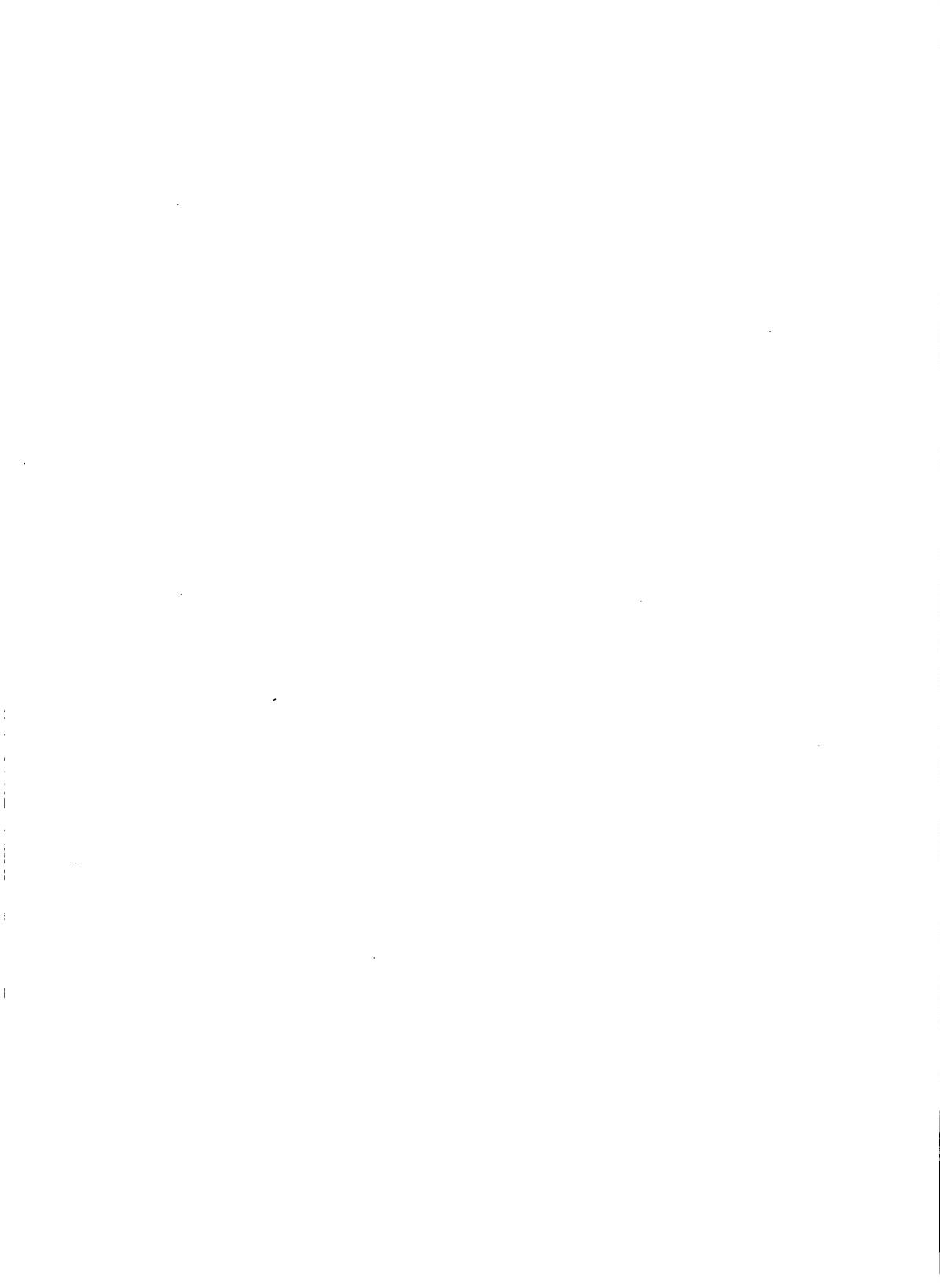
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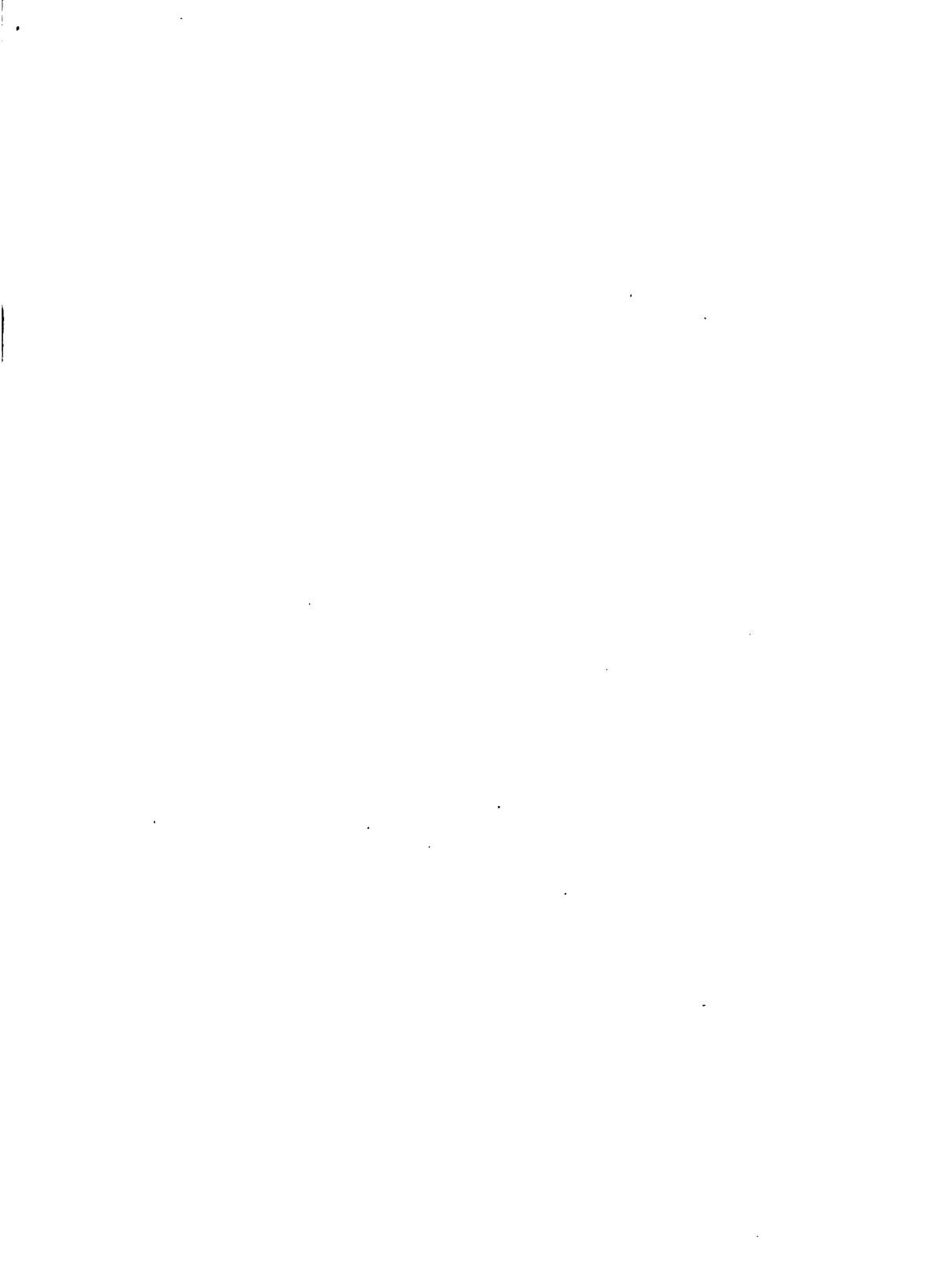


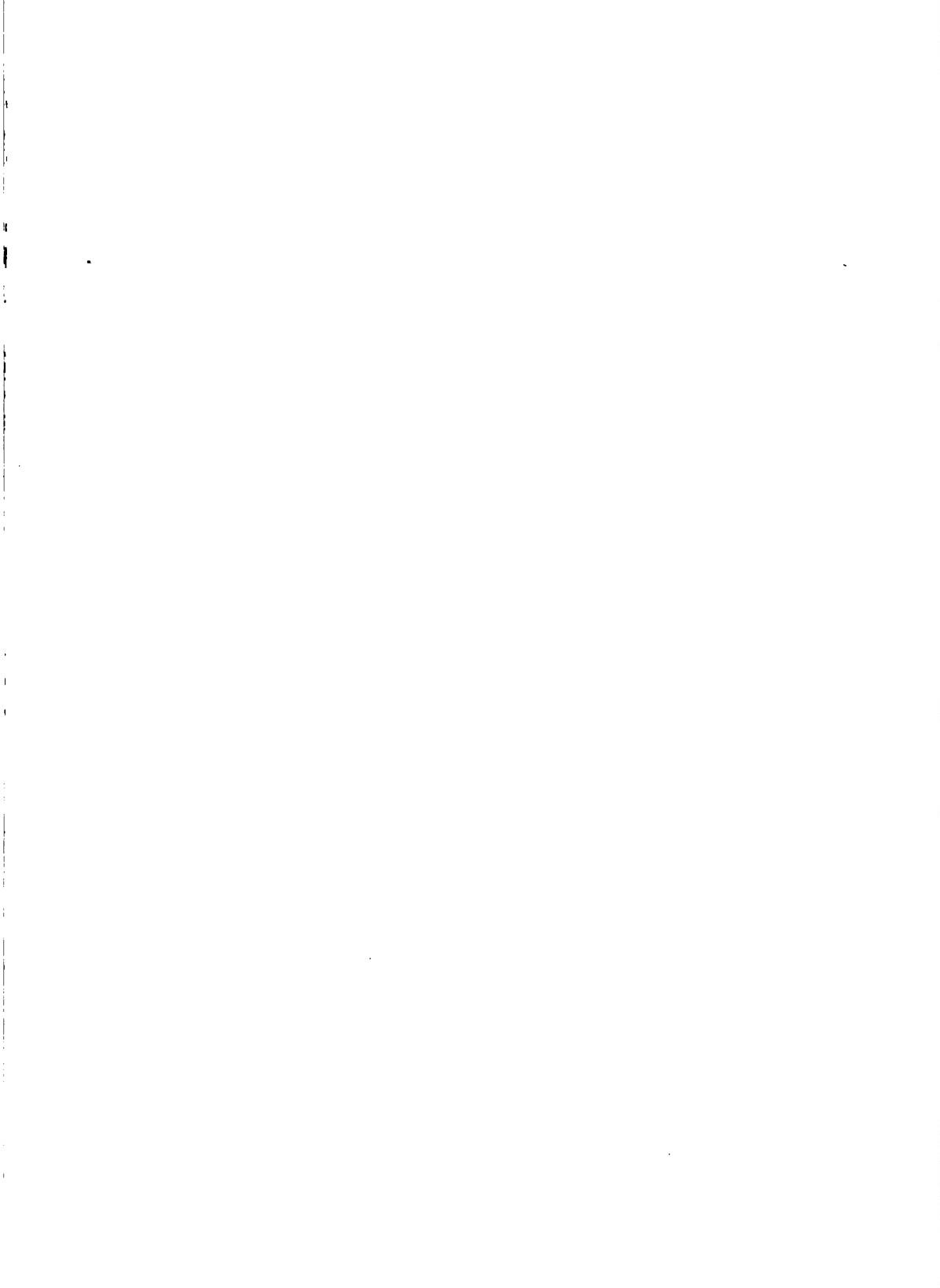




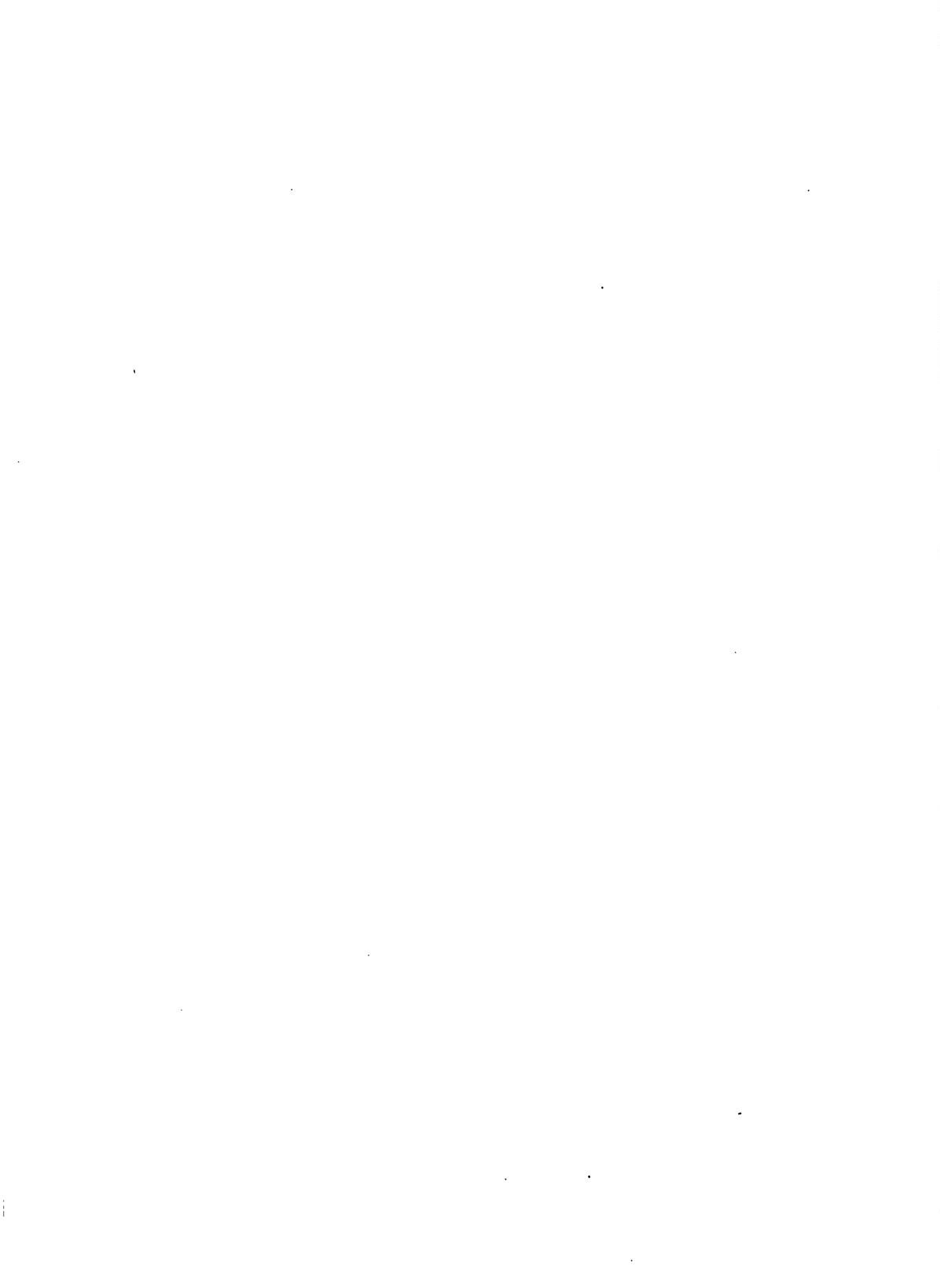
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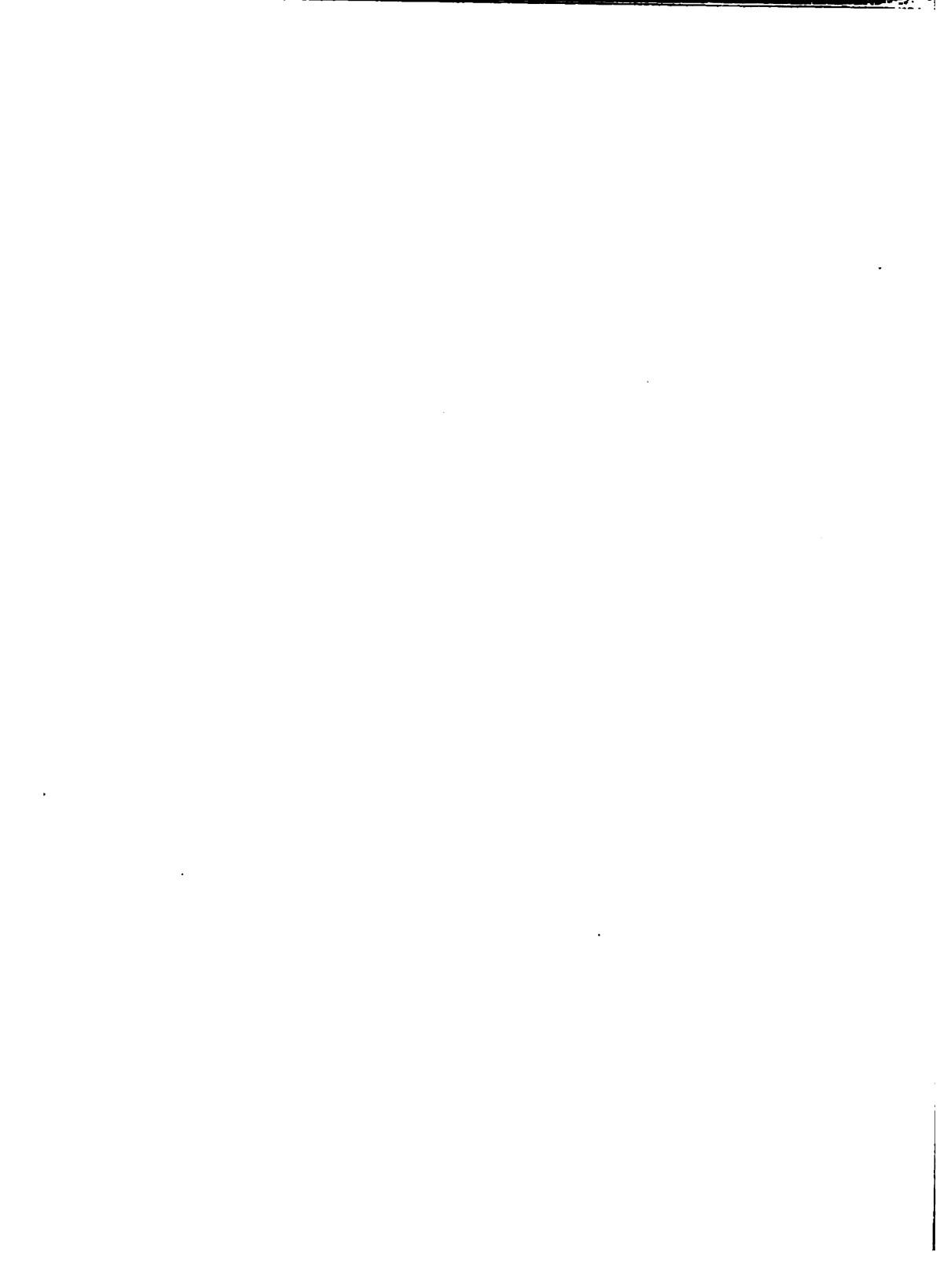






**An Old  
Sweetheart of Mine**







—*Illustrated by Charles E. Meryon*

# An Old Sweetheart of Mine

James Whitcomb Riley

Drawings by  
Howard Chandler Christy

Decorations by  
Virginia Keep

The Bobbs-Merrill Company  
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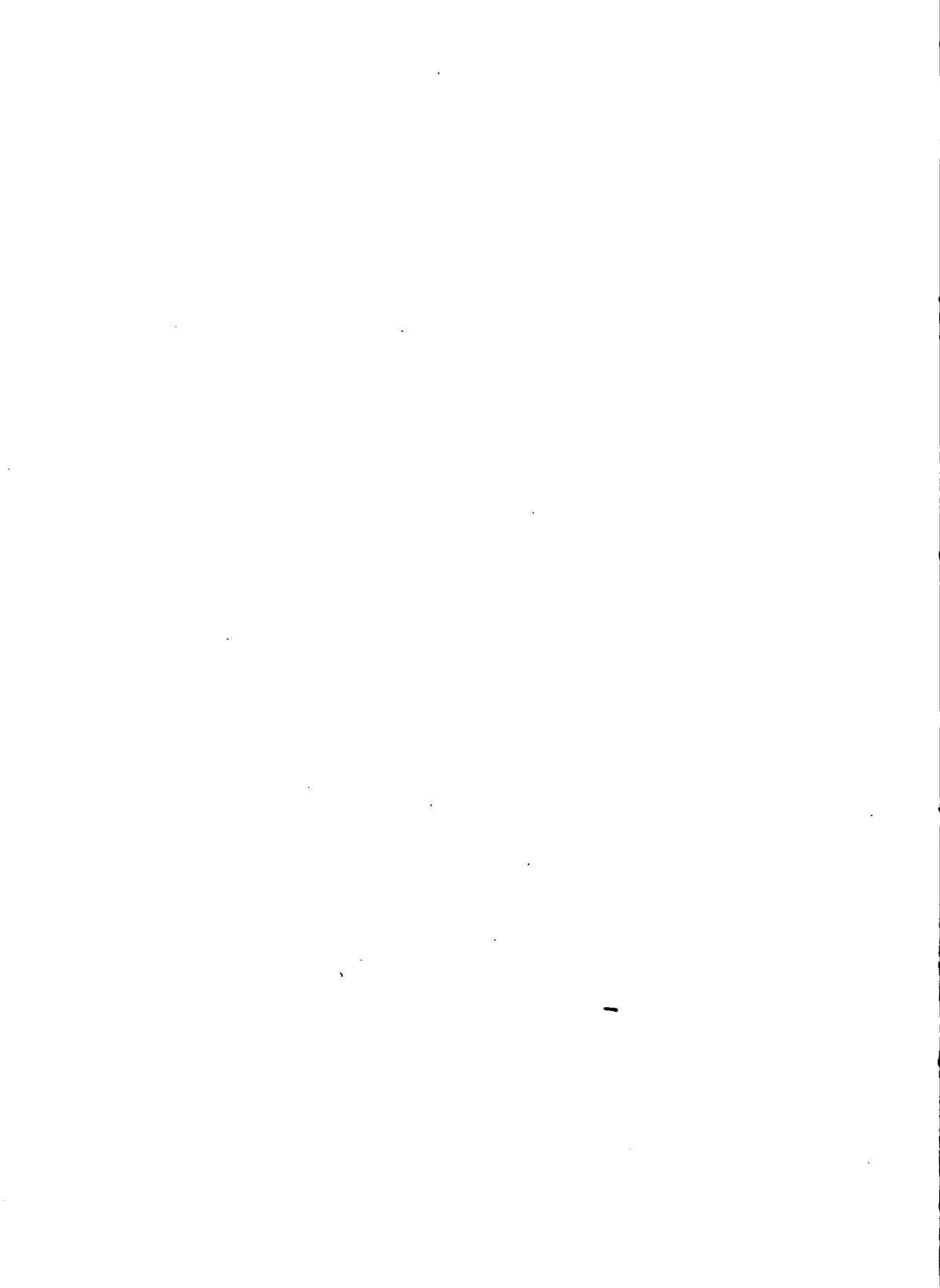
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**INSCRIBED**

**To GEORGE C. HITT**

The beginning of whose steadfast friendship was marked by the first publication of these verses which now, expanded by writer, honored by publisher and masterfully graced by artist, seem to be a worthier symbol of the author's grateful and affectionate regard for his earliest friend



# List of Illustrations

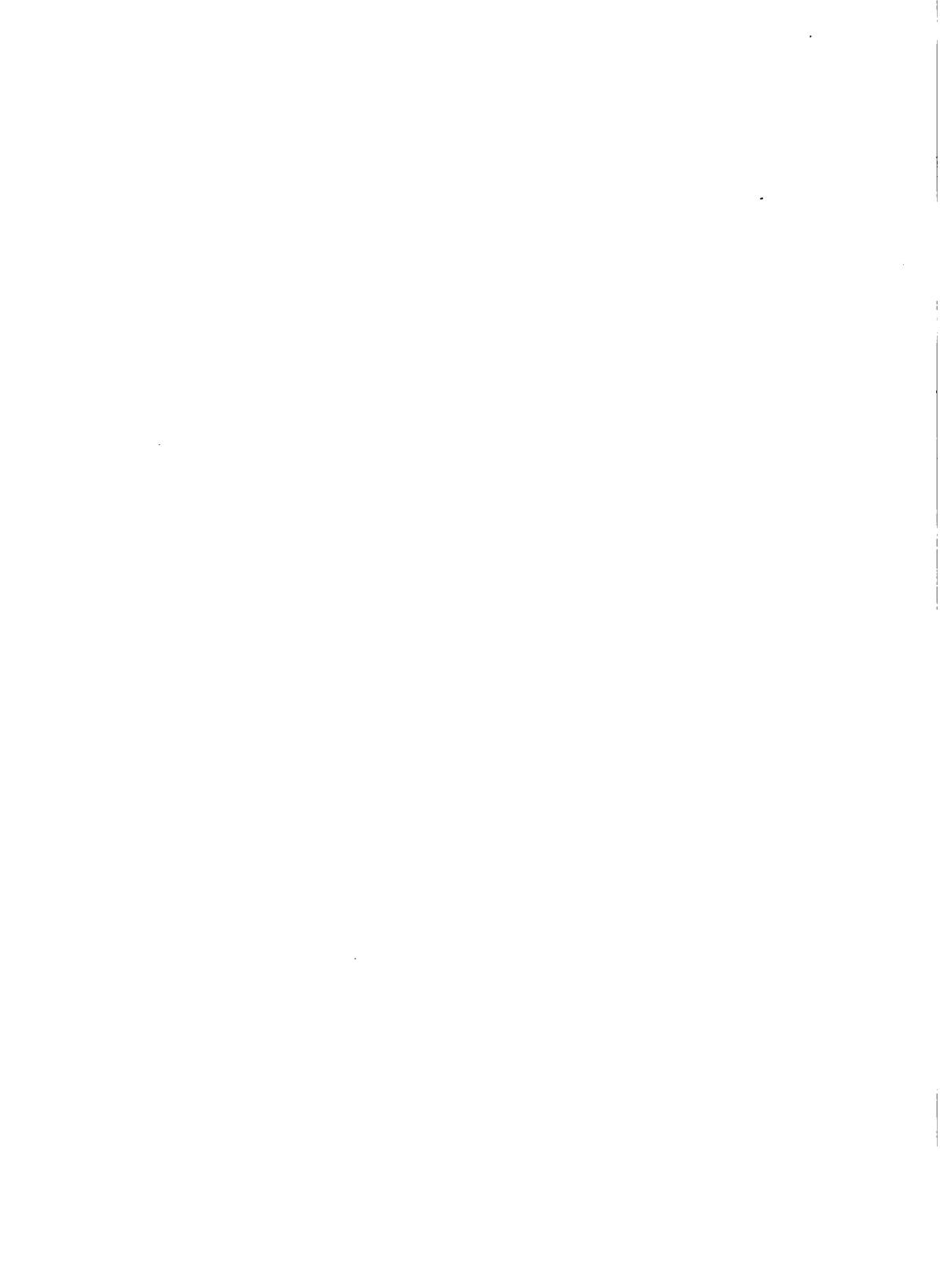
- I Frontispiece—An Old Sweetheart of Mine
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into air
- III The *then* of changeless sunny days—the  
*now* of shower and shine
- IV The old bookshelves and prints along the  
wall
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the weather ever fine
- XVIII And she my faithful sweetheart till the  
golden hair was gray
- XIX The door is softly opened, and—my wife  
is standing there



*The ordered intermingling  
of the real and the dream,—  
The mill above the river,  
and the mist above the stream;  
The life of ceaseless labor,  
brave with song and cheery call—  
The radiant skies of evening,  
with its rainbow o'er us all.*



A fair, illusive vision  
that would vanish into air  
Dared I even touch the silence  
with the whisper of a prayer?



Madame Clotilde 110L.





Nay, let me then believe in all  
the blended false and true—  
The semblance of the *old* love  
and the substance of the *new*,—

The *then* of changeless sunny days—  
the *now* of shower and shine—  
But Love forever smiling,—  
as that old sweetheart of mine.



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This ever-restful sense of *home*,  
    though shouts ring in the hall.—  
The easy-chair—the old bookshelves  
    and prints along the wall;

The rare *Habanas* in their box,  
or gaunt churchwarden-stem  
That often wags, above the jar,  
derisively at them.



—John C. Cratty Jr.





As one who cons at evening  
o'er an album, all alone,  
And muses on the faces  
of the friends that he has known,

So I turn the leaves of Fancy,  
till, in shadowy design,  
I find the smiling features of  
an old sweetheart of mine.



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The lamplight seems to glimmer  
with a flicker of surprise,  
As I turn it low—to rest me  
of the dazzle in my eyes,

And light my pipe in silence,  
    save a sigh that seems to yoke  
Its fate with my tobacco  
    and to vanish with the smoke.



— by Charles Chesnutt —





'Tis a *fragrant* retrospection,—  
for the loving thoughts that start  
Into being are like perfume  
from the blossom of the heart;

And to dream the old dreams over  
is a luxury divine—  
When my truant fancies wander  
with that old sweetheart of mine.



— and the other day —





Though I hear beneath my study,  
    like a fluttering of wings,  
The voices of my children  
    and the mother as she sings—

I feel no twinge of conscience  
to deny me any theme  
When Care has cast her anchor  
in the harbor of a dream—



—John Charles Chisolm

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MICH.



In fact, to speak in earnest,  
I believe it adds a charm  
To spice the good a trifle  
with a little dust of harm,—

For I find an extra flavor  
in Memory's mellow wine  
That makes me drink the deeper  
to that old sweetheart of mine.





Stile Chandler-Christy





O Childhood-days enchanted!  
O the magic of the Spring!—  
With all green boughs to blossom white,  
and all bluebirds to sing!

When all the air, to toss and quaff,  
made life a jubilee  
And changed the children's song and  
laugh to shrieks of ecstasy.



— Ward Chandler —





With eyes half closed in clouds that ooze  
from lips that taste, as well,  
The peppermint and cinnamon,  
I hear the old School-bell,

And from "Recess" romp in again  
from "Blackman's" broken line,  
To—smile, behind my "lesson",  
at that old sweetheart of mine.





A face of lily-beauty,  
with a form of airy grace,  
Floats out of my tobacco  
as the “Genii” from the vase;

And I thrill beneath the glances  
of a pair of azure eyes  
As glowing as the summer  
and as tender as the skies.





I can see the pink sunbonnet  
and the little, checkered dress  
She wore when first I kissed her  
and she answered the caress

With the written declaration that,  
“As surely as the vine  
Grew ’round the stump,” she loved me—  
that old sweetheart of mine.





Again I make her presents,  
in a really helpless way,—  
The big “Rhode Island Greening”—  
(I was hungry too, that day!)—

But I follow her from Spelling,  
with her hand behind her—so—  
And I slip the apple in it—  
and the Teacher doesn't know!



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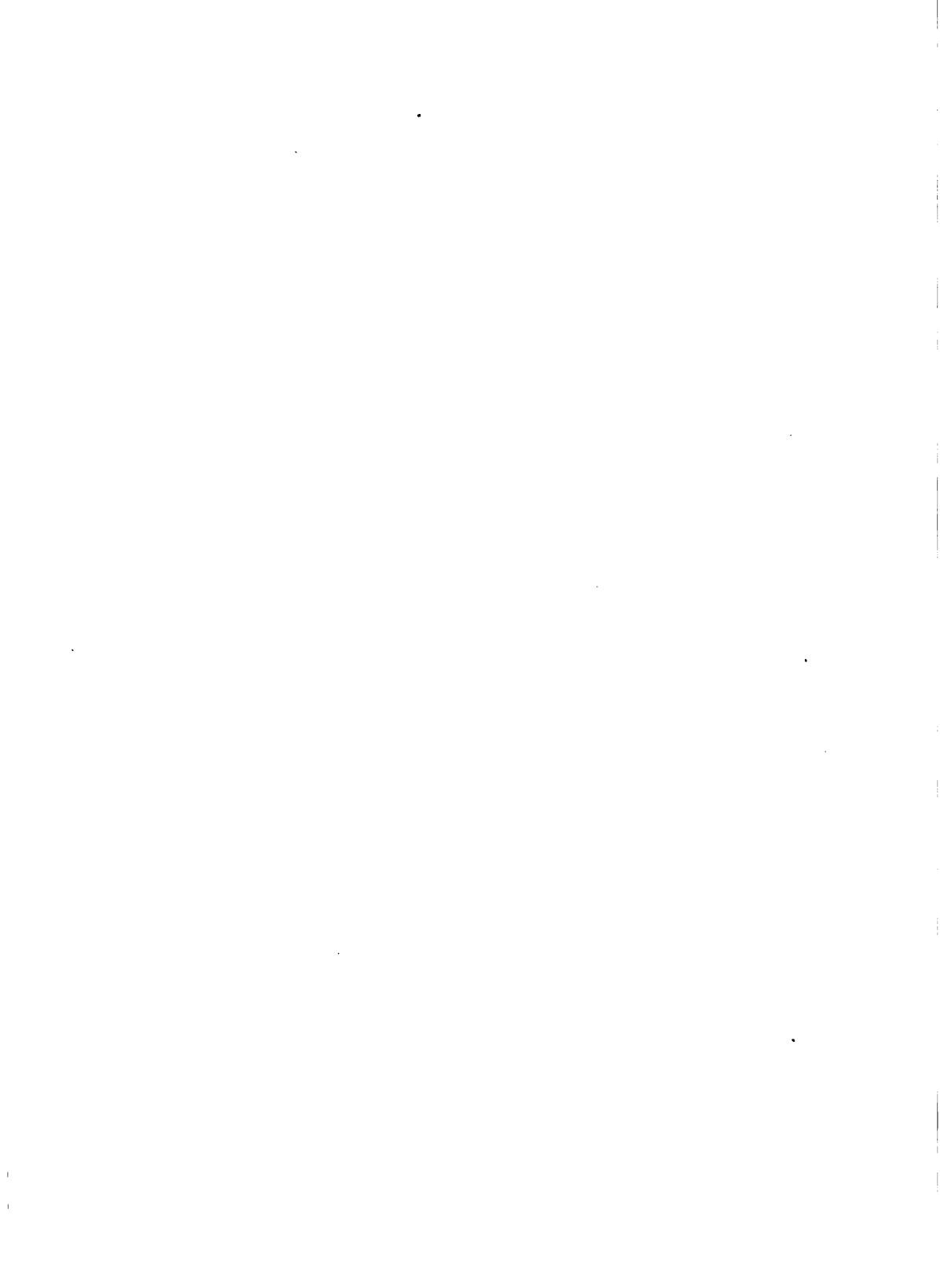
I give my *treasures* to her—all,—  
    my pencil—blue-and-red;—  
And, if little girls played marbles,  
    *mine* should all be *hers*, instead!—

But *she* gave me her *photograph*,  
and printed “Ever Thine”  
Across the back—in blue-and-red—  
that old sweetheart of mine!



Franklin Cushing 1912





And again I feel the pressure  
of her slender little hand,  
As we used to talk together  
of the future we had planned,—

When I should be a poet,  
and with nothing else to do  
But write the tender verses  
that she set the music to....



—Howard Chandler Christy —





When we should live together  
in a cozy little cot  
Hid in a nest of roses,  
with a fairy garden-spot,

Where the vines were ever fruited  
and the weather ever fine,  
And the birds were ever singing  
for that old sweetheart of mine....



Loyd Currie





When I should be her lover  
    forever and a day,  
And she my faithful sweetheart  
    till the golden hair was gray;

And we should be so happy  
that when either's lips were dumb  
They would not smile in Heaven  
till the other's kiss had come.





But, ah! my dream is broken  
by a step upon the stair,  
And the door is softly opened,  
and—my wife is standing there:

Yet with eagerness and rapture  
    all my visions I resign,—  
To greet the *living* presence  
    of that old sweetheart of mine.

